

Washington, DC - As part of his continuing effort to help limit future flood damage in the Southern Tier, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the House approved his request and allocated \$100,000 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin a new study that will identify ways to mitigate flooding along the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. The Senate is also poised to pass the funds for the study, which are included in the fiscal year 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. The measure will then be sent to the White House where President Obama is expected to sign it into law.

"The best way to prevent extensive flooding along the Upper Susquehanna River Basin in the future is to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers come into the Southern Tier and work on making adjustments to the basin so that we never again see the type of damage we've experienced in recent years," Hinchey said. "By investing a relatively modest amount of money in flood prevent efforts now, we can help save lives and prevent a significant amount of money in property damage in the future. This study and the subsequent remediation efforts that will be undertaken are smart investments that will yield great benefits for the region."

The new flood study for which Hinchey secured funding is one of only 25 new such studies that the Army Corps is conducting across the country. The congressman used his position as a member of the House Appropriations Committee to obtain the funding. The federal money will enable the Army Corps to commence a reconnaissance study that will help determine different ways flooding can be limited or prevented along the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. Following the study, it's expected that the Corps will begin work to implement the study's suggestions.

It's estimated that flood mitigation work that the Army Corps completed prior to June 2006 prevented \$450 million in damage beyond the destruction that occurred. Following the flood event, emergency programs and additional operation and maintenance funds were used to the fullest extent possible. While this aided in short-term and emergency-type assistance, these funds are not available for proactive planning and evaluations to forecast or address future flood events and problem areas. In addition, the short-term and emergency funds are for site-specific issues that arise following a flood event and are not applicable for comprehensive watershed or basinwide solutions. Hinchey said a systems-based approach is needed to identify appropriate federal and non-federal problem areas, as well as what types of investments are needed to reduce future flood damages and save lives.

Earlier this year, Hinchey helped prevent the discontinuation of streamgages along the

Susquehanna and other parts of New York that provide valuable flood forecasting and warning information. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), which manages streamgages, had planned to close dozens of them because of budget constraints. As a result of pressure from Hinchey and others, USGS announced on April 8 that funding would be restored for 17 of the most critical streamgages along the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Walkill river basins.

As part of a separate bill that is still awaiting final congressional approval, Hinchey obtained initial House approval of \$462,000 for much-needed flood prevention work in the City of Binghamton and the Town of Union. Those funds would be used to construct a concrete wall with a flood closure system and to make improvements to a flood channel.